

# Gender Effects on Assertiveness and Different Personality Traits

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## Abstract

The determination of this study is to scrutinise the influence of gender on a variety of personality dimensions, including “decisiveness, responsibility, emotional stability, masculinity, sociability, heterosexuality, ego-strength, curiosity, dominance, and assertiveness”. On the numerous personality dimensions, it was hypothesized that male and female student scores would not differ significantly. The sample included 150 male and 100 female students randomly selected from Patna, Bihar, colleges. The Differential Personality Scale (Sinha & Singh, 1979) and the Assertiveness Scale (Lakshmi, 1993) were employed for this purpose. According to the findings, male and female students scored substantially differently on the decisiveness, sociability, heterosexuality, and assertiveness personality dimensions. However, there were no significant differences in the personality dimensions of responsibility, emotional stability, masculinity, ego-strength, curiosity, and dominance.

**Key words:** Gender differences, Assertiveness, Personality, Traits, Characteristics

## Introduction

As a technique for behavior modification, clinical psychologists have already acknowledged the significance of assertive behavior. It has been used as both a desensitization technique and a means of developing more effective coping behaviors. (Coleman & Broen, 1972). It is especially beneficial for those with interpersonal difficulties due to conditioned anxiety responses that prevent them from "speaking up" for what they perceive to be appropriate and correct. There are numerous definitions and descriptions of assertive behavior. The majority of authors, however, tend to agree with the following characteristics of assertive behavior that Rimm and Masters have articulated so effectively: (1979).

Interpersonal behavior characterized by the open and relatively direct expression of thoughts and emotions is assertive behavior.

- Assertive behaviour is socially appropriate.
- When person is behaving assertively, the feelings and welfare of others are taken into account.”

According to Smith, for an individual to be assertive, he or she must not only be aware of his or her rights but also be able to assert them in a variety of situations. Not only were assertive rights essential for the individual (as a means to actualize his or her potential), but also for society as a whole, as they would promote social and labor harmony. (Smith, 2006). Assertiveness is interpersonal behavior that permits the direct expression of one's emotions without cognitive distortions or anxiety, combining verbal and nonverbal components, and the defense of one's rights while maintaining respect for others. It entails asserting one's rights and communicating one's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a straightforward, honest, and appropriate manner that does not violate the rights of another. Alberti and Emmons wrote, "Assertive behavior promotes equality in human relationships, allowing us to act in our own best interests, stand up for ourselves without undue anxiety,

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express honest feelings without denying the rights of others, and exercise personal rights without denying the rights of others". (1990). In some situations, a person may be adequately assertive, while in others, they may be ineffective or even inhibited. The trait of assertiveness is unstable and inconsistent. Presently, there is no doubt that students with assertive competence will develop more rapidly in the school environment, as this setting will allow them to manage interpersonal social situations effectively. Assertiveness is a positive trait that is advantageous for everyone. The discussion makes it abundantly apparent that assertiveness results in a healthy, complex, and regret-free personality. A non-assertive person is never content with his life, making it challenging for himself and others.

### **Decisiveness**

The 'decisiveness' dimension measured such aspects as the ability to make quick decisions in contentious matters; to decide the order of importance in which activities could be undertaken on a priority basis; to make quick decisions for undertaking any journey; to take clear-cut stands on any given issues; to remain firm over one's own decision; to be able to resolve conflicts quickly and to make political, social, religious, and other independent decisions (Sinha & Singh, 1976).

### **Responsibility**

Responsibility has a broad scope. It may be social, economic, or familial. This dimension primarily covered the following: to complete a task on time; to keep a close eye on what is right or wrong when interacting with others; to meet people at the appointed time; to be punctual in following a schedule; to dress appropriately before entering a public place; to act effectively as a leader or to hold a key position in an organization; to accept the responsibility of providing meals, lodging, etc. for a large group of people; and to adhere to one's commitments (Sinha & Singh, 1976).

### **Emotional Stability**

The components of 'emotional stability' dimension items have generally included the following: the ability to control one's emotions; the ability to respond comfortably to questions posed in a group or in an interview; the ability to put illnesses in their proper perspective and to interact confidently with others; freedom from common phobic reactions; the ability to face personal comments and criticisms realistically; freedom from doubts over one's actions or reactions; and the ability to have an objective evaluation of oneself.

### **Masculinity**

'Masculinity' The test included items such as the ability to travel on foot, on a horse, on an elephant, or on a motorcycle; to perform arduous and risky labor; to accept a job in the police or the military; to accept and prefer a risky and arduous role in a play or a drama; to play outdoor games; to not be easily moved to tears; to follow or chase someone until they are caught; to take an interest in mountaineering (Sinha and Singh, 1976).

### **Friendliness**

The 'friendliness' dimension included items such as developing deeper acquaintances with people, assisting others in times of need and displaying appropriate love and affection to juniors and strangers, and maintaining cordial relationships with those only superficially known, etc (Sinha & Singh, 1976).

### Heterosexuality

The 'heterosexuality' dimension included items such as having a normal sex relationship with members of the opposite sex, not feeling shy in the presence of members of the opposite sex, and actively participating in a discussion over sex-related matters, telling decent jokes involving sex, and actively taking part in a cultural program alongside members of the opposite sex (Sinha & Singh, 1976).

### Ego–Strength

The 'dimension of 'ego-strength' appeared to be significant because it covered such items as the ability to concentrate and attend to multiple activities at once; to face and meet life's challenges realistically; to bear frustrations and handle them effectively; to have feelings of personal adequacy and vitality; to be relatively free from nightmares; to have adequate control over impulses; to be tolerant of individual differences in ways of doing things; and to be tolerant of individual differences in ways of thinking (Sinha & Singh, 1976).

### Curiosity

The 'curiosity' dimension of personality included items such as a tendency to explore the details of relatively new objects or things; to inquire about strangers and policemen upon their sudden arrival; to arrive at the place or destination ahead of schedule; to delve into the details of the construction of a complex machine or work of art; to try to learn the contents of others' conversations and their reactions to oneself; to inquire about people's opinions of oneself; and to inquire people regarding one's appearance (Sinha & Singh, 1976).

### Dominance

The 'dominance' dimension of personality covered in its item such ideas as a tendency to dictate to others what they are required to do; to strongly oppose an opponent; to present arguments in favor of one's own point of view; to undertake the supervision of a difficult and complex task; to act well as the head of a committee or commission; to settle disputes between rivals; to impose one's will on others; and to act as the leader of one's group, etc (Sinha & Singh, 1976).

### Hypothesis

Ho: Male and female students' scores on personality dimensions such as decisiveness, responsibility, emotional stability, masculinity, sociability, heterosexuality, ego-strength, curiosity, dominance, and assertiveness were hypothesized not to differ significantly.

### Method of Study Sample

150 male and 100 female undergraduate students were randomly selected from Patna for the sample. (Bihar). All present males and females in the classroom were included in the sample. The assumption was made that psychometric characteristics of students in a classroom are typically distributed. The age range was 14 to 17, with males having a mean age of  $M=15.24$ ,  $SD=2.54$ , and females having a mean age of  $M=14.28$ ,  $SD=2.68$ .

### Tests & Instruments

The following assessments and instruments were used to measure personality dimensions.(i) The

Differential Personality Scale (DPS, Sinha & Singh, 1976) was used to measure the respondents' various personality dimensions. (ii) A measurement instrument for assertiveness (Lakshmi, 1993) Personal Data Blank was designed to elicit biographical and other data.

### **(i) Differential Personality Scale (DPS)**

In the present study, Sinha and Singh's (1976) scale was employed to measure various personality traits, including decisiveness, responsibility, emotional stability, masculinity, sociability, heterosexuality, ego-strength, curiosity, and dominance. Each trait's reliability on the scale was calculated separately. The test-retest reliability ranged from 0.73 to 0.86 for various characteristics, which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level of confidence. Both procedures, i.e., the odd-even and the first- versus second- half of the test, were used to calculate the split- half reliability of the traits. The split-half reliabilities ranged between 0.82 and 0.90, all of which were significant at the 0.001 level of confidence. The intercorrelations between the various dimensions were also computed. The low and statistically insignificant correlation values provide evidence for the characteristics' independence. Hussain adapted Bell's Adjustment Inventory for the purpose of calculating the validity of the scale. (1968). There was a significant correlation between a number of scale dimensions and various areas of the adjustment inventory.

### **Assertiveness Scale (A-S)**

This scale was created and applied to a cohort that ranged in age from 13 to 18 years. 53 objects were initially constructed. Several components were taken from existing assertiveness inventories, specifically the Gambrill-Richey Assertion Inventory. (Rimm & Masters, 1979, p.67). Those modifications were made to accommodate Indian conditions without impairing or distorting the content or their meaning. These items were presented to three clinical psychologists who either taught or practiced clinical psychology. Keeping in mind the objective of the examination, they served as assessors in evaluating the utility and validity of the items. When necessary, items were modified to make them more comprehensible and understandable. Each item's response was acquired using a forced "No/Yes" format. This action was taken to eliminate the prospect of a response set. In addition, the extreme left response 'Yes' or 'No' disclosed assertive behavior, which facilitated the examination's examination. The higher the score, the more assertive the behavior. The gauge used in this study consisted of 41 items as opposed to 53. Temporal stability and internal consistency of the test ranged between 0.71 and 0.77 for both the test-retest method (the retest was administered after a 21-day interval) and split-half techniques.

### **Personal Data Blank**

A personal data blank was developed for seeking the information regarding the background factors, such as, age, gender, economic status of the respondent.

### **Procedure**

In a classroom setting, data were collected in groups of 8 to 10 individuals. The subjects were separated by a considerable distance and were not permitted to communicate. The Assertiveness Scale (A-S) was administered first, followed by the Dynamic Personality Scale (DPS) 15 minutes later. No time limit was imposed, and the subjects completed both exams in between one and one-half hours.

## Results& Discussion

T-ratios were computed in order to test the hypothesis that male and female pupils' scores on personality dimensions would not differ significantly. Table 1 provides a summary of the statistical results.

**Table 1 Comparison of Males and Females Scores on Personality Dimensions**

Personality Dimensions	Groups	N	M	SD	t- ratio (df=248)
<b>Decisiveness</b>	Male	150	11.25	2.34	<b>2.53*</b>
	Female	100	10.54	2.12	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Male	150	10.77	1.92	1.17
	Female	100	10.49	1.66	
<b>Emotional Stability</b>	Male	150	11.82	2.51	0.31
	Female	100	11.93	2.43	
<b>Masculinity</b>	Male	150	9.93	2.05	1.40
	Female	100	10.35	2.54	
<b>Friendliness</b>	Male	150	13.94	2.40	<b>4.86*</b>
	Female	100	12.48	2.28	
<b>Heterosexuality</b>	Male	150	07.49	3.69	<b>2.28*</b>
	Female	100	08.45	2.86	
<b>Ego-Strength</b>	Male	150	11.13	4.86	0.22
	Female	100	11.44	3.03	
<b>Curiosity</b>	Male	150	11.33	2.81	1.05
	Female	100	10.96	2.73	

- $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

An inspection of Table 1 shows that the mean scores of males and females in respect of such personality variables as *responsibility* ( $t = 1.17$ ,  $df = 248$ ); *emotional-stability* ( $t = 0.31$ ,  $df = 248$ ); *masculinity* ( $t = 1.40$ ,  $df = 248$ ); *ego- strength* ( $t = 0.22$ ,  $df = 248$ ); *curiosity* ( $t = 1.05$ ,  $df = 248$ ) and *dominance* ( $t = 1.46$ ,  $df = 248$ ) were not significant even at .05 level of confidence. However, males and females differed significantly in respect of such

variables as *decisiveness* ( $t=2.53$ ,  $df=248$ ), *friendliness* ( $t=4.86$ ,  $df=248$ ) *heterosexuality* ( $t=2.28$ ,  $df=248$ ) and *assertiveness* ( $t=9.14$ ,  $df=248$ ). Thus, majority of the personality variables, males and females did not differ significantly.

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